

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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R 041946Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2337

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

HQ, USSOUTHCOM, SCJ2

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, MASS, PFOR, UY

SUBJECT: FURTHER REACTION TO KOCH AMENDMENT

REF: MONTEVIDEO 3732 (DTG 021346Z OCT 76)

1. SUMMARY. URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS, EXCEPTING ONLY THE MOST PERCEPTIVE, ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KOCH AMENDMENT. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE GOU'S ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGN AND ITS LATE 1975 ROUND UP OF COMMUNIST PARTY PEOPLE RESULTED IN A COMMUNIST-INSPIRED WORLDWIDE CAMPAIGN AGAINST URUGUAY. AS A RESULT, THEY BELIEVE, A FEW LIBERAL CONGRESSMEN WERE ABLE TO MISLEAD THE U.S., BRINGING IT TO ABANDON A STAUNCH FRIEND. CRITICISM IS LIMITED TO THE CONGRESS AND URUGUAYANS SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT THE INHERENT GOODNESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL PREVAIL, PERHAPS IN THIS ELECTION, AND THE U.S.

"WILL SEE THE ERROR OF ITS WAYS." THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE EMBASSY MAY BE SUBJECTED TO INCREASING SCRUTINY BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN ITS DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, THE MOST ADVERSE IMPACT ON U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE A REINFORCEMENT OF THE EXISTING

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SEIGE MENTALITY AND A MOVE BY THE GOU TO FINALLY STRENGTHEN

COOPERATION AND TIES WITH COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE REACTION OF URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS, LIKE THE GENERAL POPULACE, TO THE PASSAGE OF THE KOCH AMENDMENT HAS BEEN AMBIVALENT TO DATE. MOST LIKE AMERICANS, ADMIRE THE UNITED STATES, AND WOULD PREFER TO REMAIN A TRADITIONAL FRIEND AND TO BE SO CONSIDERED BY THE UNITED STATES. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MOST PERCEPTIVE, THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN URUGUAY ARE THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF OUR DISCONTENT. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT, AS A DIRECT REACTION TO THE ANTI-TUPAMARO CAMPAIGN IN URUGUAY FOLLOWED BY POLITICAL CHANGE AND THE LATE 1975 ROUNDUP OF COMMUNIST PARTY PEOPLE, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, WHICH THEY VIEW WITH SUSPICION AS AN "INFILTRATED" ORGANIZATION, LAUNCHED A WORLD-WIDE CAMPAIGN AGAINST URUGUAY. SINCE THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE KNOW THAT URUGUAY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STAUNCH FRIEND WHICH EARES ITS VALUES, THEY BELIEVE THE LEGISLATION REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A FEW MISGUIDED LIBERALS WHO ARE INFLUENCED BY SELF-SERVING AND EVEN INFILTRATED ORGANIZATIONS. WHILE THEY KNOW LITTLE OF THE BACKGROUND OF THE WITNESSES WHO TESTIFIED AGAINST URUGUAY (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WILSON FERREIRA), THEY QUESTION THEIR CREDENTIALS AND DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF CONDITIONS.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THESE OFFICIALS' REACTION TO MEMBERS OF THE

MISSION, THEIR INITIAL COMMENTS HAVE GIVEN WAY TO A MORE OR LESS CONSISTENT PATTERN OF CRITICIZING CONGRESSMAN KOCH AND/OR A GROUP OF CONGRESSMEN ON THE ONE HAND AND EMPHASIZING ON THE OTHER THAT THEY ARE NOT ATTACKING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. PRIVATELY, THEY ARE CONTINUING CORDIAL PERSONAL RELATIONS AND EMPHASIZING THAT THEIR COMPLAINT IS WITH THE UNJUST ACTION BY A SMALL NUCLEUS OF CONGRESSMEN. OUR BUSINESS CONTACTS AT VARIOUS MINISTRIES SO FAR CONTINUE TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT IMPEDIMENTS ALTHOUGH THE SO-CALLED KOCH AMENDMENT INEVITABLY BECOMES A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION.

4. PERHAPS INFLUENCED BY THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES, SOME LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO SHOW THE U.S. MISSION SIGNS OF DISPLEASURE. ONE INDICATION CONCERNED THE GOU WITHDRAWING THE EMBASSY'S PERMISSION TO REMOVE UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE DIRECTLY FROM THE AIRPORT PRIOR TO THE OWNER'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARRIVAL. MILITARY OFFICERS REFUSED TO ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO FAREWELL LUNCHEONS IN HONOR OF DEPARTING MILGROUP OFFICERS. WE NOW BELIEVE THAT SOME OF THESE MAY HAVE BEEN INDEPENDENT MOVES BY OVERZEALOUS INDIVIDUALS MISREADING THEIR SUPERIORS' INTENTIONS. THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS CALLED IN ONE OF OUR SENIOR LOCALS ON OCTOBER 1 TO TELL HIM THAT CUSTOMS PROCEDURES HAD NOT CHANGED. AT THE SAME TIME MILITARY OFFICERS, INCLUDING GENERAL QUEIROLO,

ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, BEGAN ACCEPTING INVITATIONS HONORING DEPARTING MILGROUP OFFICERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED A FIRST-PERSON NOTE FROM THE FONOFF REQUESTING A LIST OF ALL PERSONS HERE UNDER THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT IT WAS INSTIGATED BY COL. MACHADO, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FONOFF, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW TO WHAT END. THUS, DESPITE THE ASSURANCES OF THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS, AND CONTINUING CORDIAL AND OFFICIAL RELATIONS, WE COULD BE HEADING INTO A PERIOD WHERE URUGUAY PROCEDURES IN OUR CASE ARE FOLLOWED TO THE LETTER AND SLOW-DOWNS MAY OCCUR

5. PRIVATE CITIZENS HAVE INVARIABLY RAISED THE KOCH AMENDMENT IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS. THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE PRESENT POLITICAL STRUCTURE ARE INVARIABLY OUTRAGED AT THE "FAILURE" OF THE U.S. TO COMPREHEND THE EVOLUTION OF THE URUGUAYAN SITUATION BEGINNING WITH THE ANTI-TUPAMARO STRUGGLE. THEY RESENT THE "SELECTIVE"

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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS, THE PUNITIVE SANCTIONS, AND POINT TO WORSE PROBLEMS EXISTING ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. THOSE WHO DO NOT SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT RESERVATIONS, BUT

ACCEPT IT AS NECESSARY UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, ALSO RESENT THE PUNITIVE NATURE OF THE ACTION, EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT THE SITUATION HAS IMPROVED MARKEDLY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS AND FEEL A DEEP SENSE OF WOUNDED PRIDE THAT THEIR AND THEIR COUNTRY'S PRESTIGE AND IMAGE HAVE BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED ABORAD, AND UNJUSTLY SO THEY BELIEVE. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE EXPECTED THROUGH "COERSIVE" ACTION. THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT STATE THE BELIEF THAT THE ACTION WAS NECESSARY AND THEY SUPPORT IT IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL FORCE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS IN URUGUAY.

6. UNFORTUNATELY, THE TERMINATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO URUGUAY FOR FY77 WILL REINFORCE THE EXISTING SEIGE MENTALITY AND CONVINCE THE GOU TO SEEK TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN TIES WITHIN THE REGION. INDICATIONS THAT THE SOUTHERN CONE NATIONS, BOLIVIA, PARAGUAY, AND, IN SOME INSTANCES, BRAZIL, ARE MOVING CLOSER TOGETHER MILITARILY, ECONOMICALLY, AND POLITICALLY, CONTINUE. THE MOST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECENT MOVE, CHILE'S COMING INTO THE CUENCA DE LA PLATA REGIONAL ORGANIZATION, WAS ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 30. A NUMBER OF URUGUAY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING BRIGADIER CARDOZO, HAVE SAID POINTEDLY THAT THAT BELIEVE THE U.S. IS COMMITTING A TERRIBLE ERROR TURNING ITS BACK ON ITS FRIENDS. NEVERTHELESS, THEY ADD, URUGUAY CAN TURN TO FRIENDS IN THE REGION AND WILL DO SO. THEY FOLLOW THIS WITH EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE THAT THE TRUE VALUES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL PREVAIL IN THE LONG RUN AND THE U.S. "WILL SEE THE ERROR OF ITS WAYS." ALONG THESE LINES, THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE URUGUAYAN ARMY MAGAZINE, EL DOLDADO, COMMENTED ON THE U.S. ELECTIONS AS FOLLOWS: "FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTHERN CONE BUT ALSO FOR ALL OF THEM, THESE ELECTIONS CAN HAVE SINGULAR IMPORTANCE. BEYOND WHOMEVER MIGHT BE ELECTED TO THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY, NEW POLITICAL TENDENCIES AMONG THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE WILL SHOW THEMSELVES AND WE WILL SEE HOW FAR AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION SUPPORTS CERTAIN HOSTILE ACTS, ISOLATED BUT REAL, WHICH THE AMERICAN CONGRESS HAS APPROVED..."

7. THE COINCIDENCE IN TIMING OF THE TERMINATION OF THE MILITARY GROUP (EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1) HAS ALSO BEEN MISREAD HERE AND TENDS TO BE LINKED TO THE SUSPENSION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE DESPITE AN EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE INTENDED TO PUT THE MILITARY GROUP'S WITHDRAWAL INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE. THE HARKIN AMENDMENT ALSO FORMS PART OF THE PICTURE TO WELL-INFORMED GOU OFFICIALS AND EXACERBATES THE SITUATION FURTHER.

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